1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

water from the domestic pond or well and carry manure in reed baskets to the fields.

The sexes are generally segregated. The outer veranda serves as a club for the men, and they sit down on the benches there, drinking, chewing betel, and talking. The women rarely visit the veranda.[1] Similarly, men rarely join the women who are all presumably sitting in the kitchen, or in one of the inner rooms. Men and women dine separately, the women dining after the men.

When relatives visit a Coorg house, the men guests join the men hosts in the veranda, whereas the women guests join the women hosts in an inner part of the house. During the harvest festival and festival of the village-deities the men sing and dance while the women watch them from a distance. Usually the men play a more active part in the festivals than the women. There is an oracle in the festival of every village-deity, and the oracles are usually men. Women oracles are indeed rare, but where they function they are important.

Women are expected to observe a stricter code of conduct than men. For instance, formerly, a Coorg woman who had committed adultery with a low-caste man was summarily thrown out of caste, whereas a lapse on the part of a man was not treated with equal seriousness. Again, there was some difference in the punishment meted out to a man and woman: a man was liable to be fined or excommunicated, whereas excommunication was the only punishment for a woman.

Different ideals are held up for men and women. Strength, skill in fighting and hunting, and courage are admired in a man. A proverb states, 'men should die on the battlefield, and women should die in child-bed'. The killer of a tiger or panther and mother of ten children were both accorded the honour of a *mangala* ceremony. (See Chapter III.)

Formerly women seem to have enjoyed greater freedom than they do nowadays. Elderly informants remember that even as recently as fifty years ago women used to sing and beat cymbals in public on festive occasions. Coorg folksongs tell us of women who killed tigers and held assemblies of men to ridicule. In some folk-

[1] Frequently a Coorg house has a separate entrance which enables the women to move in and out of the house without being seen by the men who are gathered in the veranda.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

mortar, with solid, carved woodwork. Masons and carpenters from Malabar build them, and Coorg ancestral houses consequently resemble greatly the houses of well-to-do Nāyars. The house is usually situated on an elevation, and a narrow, high-walled and winding lane (*ōṇi*) leads up to it. From the windows in the upper story one usually obtains a fine view of the surrounding country. Formerly, in the days when feuds, or *kuḍupi* (*kuḍippaka* in Malayāḷam), between joint families were common, and a surprise raid (*kaḷḷa paḍé*) from a hostile *okka* was always a possibility, anyone coming with unfriendly intentions exposed himself to view from the windows of the ancestral house. The house was built like a fortress and was able to stand a siege for several days.

The ancestral estate usually includes an extent of jungle, some grazing land, and valleys in which rice is grown. The jungle provided the household with the necessary timber and fuel. A part of the jungle is reserved for burying or cremating the dead members of the *okka*. There is a kitchen-garden near the main building. A well or pond provides water for domestic purposes.

Every house includes an ancestor-shrine or ancestor-platform. Uncarved stones, representing cobra-deities, are planted on platforms built around the trunk of a milk-exuding tree. There may also be other uncarved stones representing minor deities like Pūda and Guḷika.

According to Lewis Rice,[1] in the seventies of the last century the Coorg *okka* frequently consisted of twenty or thirty, and occasionally even fifty members, all residing under one roof. He further tells us that previous to the invasion of Coorg by Tippu Sultan in the latter half of the eighteenth century, it was not uncommon to find in a house thirty or forty adult male relatives living together. Many *okkas* seem to have had 120 to 150 people, all living in the ancestral house.

Nowadays the *okka* commonly consists of two or three generations of agnatically-related males, their wives, and their children. Girls born in the *okka* go out on marriage as residence is patrilocal, but it sometimes happens that a woman remains unmarried for a variety of reasons. In such a case she stays in her natal *okka*. An *okka* also includes the widow of a deceased member. As mentioned earlier, leviratic unions are preferred amongst Coorgs, and a widow

[1] *Mysore and Coorg*, Bangalore, 1878, vol. iii, p. 329.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

to dead ancestors, which are made in every Coorg house, are made in the kitchen alone instead of in the ancestor-shrine or anywhere else.

There are two types of houses in Coorg, one which has an open quadrangle in the middle and the other in which there is no such open quadrangle. In the former type, the four corners of the open quadrangle are supported by four pillars, and four planks (*aimaras*) connect the four pillars at a height of about 2½ feet from the ground. These planks are regarded as sacred: none may step across them, and no woman may sit on one of them.

Planks are affixed to the top of the parapet wall in the veranda. One of these planks is called the 'ancestors' plank' (*kāraṇavaṇḍa aimara*), and it is regarded as sacred. None may sleep on it. I have heard that anyone sleeping on the 'ancestors' plank' in the house of the Karavaṇḍa *okka* is thrown down to the floor by the spirits of the ancestors.

Women very rarely visit the veranda (*kaiyālé*), and when they visit it they may not sit on one of the planks there. Nor are they allowed to sit on the planks in the central hall, though very old women occasionally take the liberty of doing so when the senior males are away. On the second day of marriage the bride sits on a plank in the veranda of the groom's house, and this is part of the ritual of admitting her into her husband's house.

At some distance from the main building is a shrine (*kaimaḍa*) devoted to the worship of the ancestors. During the periodical ancestor-propitiations (*kāraṇava téré*), small figurines representing the ancestors are kept in the shrine and worshipped. During festivals, a lamp is lit in the shrine, and cooked food is placed before the lamp.

Kaimaḍas or ancestor-shrines seem to be a recent phenomenon, and before they became popular the dead ancestors were represented by unhewn stones fixed in earthen platforms which were built round the trunks of milk-exuding trees. These platforms were called '*kāraṇava taré*' or 'ancestors' platform'. Even today in Kiggaṭnāḍ there are only ancestor-platforms and no ancestor-*shrines*.

Like the ancestors, cobra-deities are represented by unhewn stones[1] and fixed in platforms built round the trunks of milk-exuding trees. The vegetation growing near a cobra-platform is

[1] Minor deities like Pūda and Guḷika are also represented by similar stones, and occasionally found alongside stones representing cobra-deities.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

V

It is not only places which have ritual value, but also points of the compass. East is a sacred direction because the sun rises there, and Hindus in all parts of India regard the sun as a deity.

The ancestral house faces east and so does the ancestor-shrine. The lip of the sacred wall-lamp in the central hall faces east. The subject of a *mangala* ceremony sits facing east.

On getting up from his bed in the morning a Coorg salutes the wall-lamp and the sun. The cultivation of rice is accompanied by ritual at every stage, and on all these ritual occasions the subject of the rites begins by saluting the sun.

South is an inauspicious or bad-sacred direction. A corpse is buried or cremated with its head towards south. In Sanskritic Hinduism, south is the abode of Yama, the god of death.

Coorgs, like Hindus in other parts of India, regard east as a good-sacred direction and south as a bad-sacred direction. East is associated with Chūriya (sun-god), and south with Yama. Both these deities have an All-India spread. Coorgs worship these two deities along with other Hindus all over India. The possession of common values binds people together and Coorgs form a single community with Hindus all over India when they worship the same deities.

VI

Mūrta is the crucial part of *mangala*, and the rites performed prior to *mūrta* prepare the subject for it. The subject is shaved by the barber, given a bath by three married women, and dressed in ritual robes and ornaments before sitting down to *mūrta*. Shaving, the first of several preparatory rites, will be briefly considered here.

It is necessary to repeat here that shaving is done by barbers who form a caste. Contact with the barber defiles a member of a higher caste, and consequently shaving is invariably followed by a purificatory bath.

The subject of *mangala* wears a white cotton *kupya* while he is being shaved by the barber. The *kupya* is like a dressing-gown, and it is either black or white. The white gown is of cotton, has long sleeves, and covers the neck up to the throat. This is the traditional ritual dress of Coorgs. The black gown is a Westernized version of

1: Srinivas E-5 (1940-42) 1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

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THE RITE OF THE BRIDE CARRYING WATER INTO THE GROOM'S HOUSE

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A COORG HOUSE, RECENTLY BUILT

[Facing p. 80]

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

596 622 hereditary in certain *okkas*. The eldest member of the senior agnatic branch succeeded to the office in question.

596 621 Every high-caste *okka* has to send at least one man and one woman to a wedding, festival, or a common village task like repairing a road, or weeding a temple compound; and all the adult males in an *okka* are required to attend a village dance or hunt. A defaulting *okka* is fined.

596 829 The members of an *okka* have to live together from birth till death. They are bound together by numerous strong ties, and they co-operate in performing common tasks. After death, they become ancestors who continue to show an interest in their *okka* and demand propitiation from their descendants. The *okka* is something very much more than the group of living members in it at any given moment. It is a continuum through time, and the body of living members at any particular moment form only points on it. Coorgs themselves clearly state that the *okka* has a longer life than its members. They are also aware that an individual lives, in a social sense, as long as his *okka*. There is a great desire for the continuance of the *okka*, and there is no greater calamity than its extinction. When an *okka* is threatened with extinction certain traditional devices are resorted to to perpetuate it.

596 [342] The ancestral house and estate are sacred, and even today a Coorg likes to have a wedding or funeral performed in the ancestral house. The unity and solidarity of an *okka* find expression in ritual. Its strength is projected to the 'mystical' plane.

An individual is normally identified with his *okka*, but such identification of the individual with his *okka* is in extra-*okka* contexts, and it does not at all mean that the *okka* in question is undivided from within. Normally the elementary families inside an *okka* are potential groups of fission. The principles of segregation of the sexes and the unity of the members of a generation which run right through Coorg society are also at work inside the *okka*, uniting some members against the others. There are also tensions between individuals, especially among the women members.

596 572 Every Coorg *okka* is bound by the ties of friendship (*aruvāmé*) to another neighbouring Coorg *okka*. This is a traditional relationship between two neighbouring Coorg *okkas*, and it involves certain ritual and social duties. It is frequently mutual, and affinal relations between the two friendly *okkas* are common.

596 Formerly every Coorg *okka* had one or more Poleya or other low-

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

The daughter looks upon her natal home as a haven of refuge in the first few years of married life. Her first confinement takes place in her natal home because it is considered proper for the girl to be with people with whom she can be at ease.

A proverb tells us that 'the mother's love for her daughter rendered her unfit to live with her husband, the sitting hen's love destroyed the egg'. An overfond mother tries to drag her married daughter away from her husband, and this might eventually break up the marriage.

The elementary family, which is a part of the *okka* or joint family, is weakly structured among Coorgs. This is because the *okka* is so strong that it does not permit the elementary families inside it to be strong units. There is no separate term for the elementary family.

The solidarity of the elementary family does not obtain expression in ritual. It is true that the affinal tie is very strongly emphasized in mourning, and the eldest son is a mourner of the first grade, and sometimes a younger son or daughter is also called upon to become a first-grade mourner. But usually the younger children of the dead person are not distinguished from the other younger members of the *okka*.

The fact that the elementary family is weakly structured among Coorgs does not mean that it has no solidarity; and in the last 120 years its solidarity has been increasing at the expense of the solidarity of the *okka* of which it is a part. Coorg ancestral houses are large, sprawling affairs, and the members of each elementary family within an *okka* occupy either a room, or a couple of rooms, or an entire wing. Sometimes they occupy one of two or three houses belonging to the *okka*. A member of the M-*okka* once told me, 'When this house was built over seventy years ago there were only two or three people in it. But our ancestors were so wise that they built a large house with a number of rooms so that all their descendants could live in it.' Now each of the married brothers and his children occupy a room or a couple of rooms inside it.

The unity of the elementary families within the *okka* appears in certain non-ritual contexts. For instance, parents take sides with their own children against the children of another member of the *okka* in the frequent quarrels of children. A proverb tells us that 'the *okka* went to ruin over the children's talk'. Quarrels arise when 'the children of the *okka* play together, and these children's quarrels

2: Emeneau L-5 (1936-1937) 1938
AW5 Coorg AW5

584 The marriage is at present arranged by the families of the young people. The family of the young man approaches the family of a girl who is considered a suitable match and after much discussion arrangements are made; the girl is informed of them and in most cases she acquiesces. The authority of the family is ideally supreme. Young people have many opportunities of meeting, or at least of seeing one another, and as we should expect, matches that are not likely to be endurable are tacitly avoided by the elders of the family. Cases are known however where a girl has refused the arranged marriage and for various reasons elder members of her family have agreed with her and prevented the marriage; cases are also known where a young man after suggesting for himself a particular girl and carrying with him most of the other members of his family has found opposition from an elderly female member who disapproves of the girl and he has had to give up his idea. Life in a joint family, as is well known in other parts of India, is a matter [596] of the adjustment of conflicting stresses. The evidence of the [593] marriage song seems to show that at some time in the past a young man went out himself to look for a suitable girl and settled 584 the matter himself, without reference to his family until the time 174 for the formal arrangement arrived. There is probably some 533 historical truth in the account, but the period at which this [114] was the custom is not known. Richter's account of 1870 implies, though it does not mention explicitly, a state of things like that at the present day.

584 When a marriage is to be formally arranged and fixed, the aruvē[1] of the young man's family accompanied by representatives of this family, e.g. the man's father, his elder brother, or a brother-in-law, go to the house of the girl's family. There they meet the aruvē and the representatives of the girl's family. Formally the man's party declare that he will marry the girl and the girl's party that they will give the girl, and the aruvēs guarantee that [342] their respective parties will hold to the agreement. The cere- [778] mony is performed in the nellaki of the house, i.e. the portion of the central hall opposite the door, where a lamp hangs. It is regarded as the sacred part of the house and apparently the sanctity centers in the lamp, before which prayers are offered [585] in the evening to the ancestors of the sib (or nowadays to any other gods in addition). Most of the ceremonies to be described

614 764 178 [1] Two sibs stand in mutual relationship to one another, so that each provides an aruvē for the other on certain ceremonial occasions. Their duties in connexion with marriages are described in the text. At a funeral the aruvē is present and seems to have been originally entrusted with supervision of the ceremonial. At present the office tends to become a mere formality and the aruvē does not necessarily come from the traditional sib. The man of the traditional sib is called maṇṇaruvē 'land-aruvē'; one who is engaged for the occasion only is ponnaruvē 'gold-aruvē' and this term seems to carry with it some derogatory connotation.

2:Emeneau L-5 (1936-1937) 1938
AW5 Coorg AW5

are performed at the nellaki. After this formal arrangement of the marriage neither party may withdraw from their agreement.

As soon afterwards as all the preparations have been made, a variable period but seldom more than a month or two later, the wedding takes place. The Coorg season for weddings is between the end of the paddy-harvest and the breaking of the S.-W. monsoon, i.e. during the months of April and May. In ancient times any other period was inconvenient and even with the advent of transportation by motorbus and automobile no change has taken place. The day for the marriage is frequently fixed nowadays by an astrologer (kaniĕ), and the song gives ample recognition to this, though in this it may reflect the conditions of the last few centuries rather than of more ancient times. The ceremonies take place at the houses of the bride and bridegroom respectively. Ideally these should be the traditional central houses of the respective sibs (called aynumane). In very many cases however these houses are most inaccessible and perhaps not even occupied, and in such cases the actual dwelling-houses of the families are the scene of the ceremonies.

The wedding ceremonies are now to be described. On the first day each of the two persons to be married goes through the mu:rta ceremony in the house of his or her family. It is essentially a ceremony in which the person is blessed and prosperity and fertility are ensured by the sprinkling of rice on the person and feeding him or her with milk by the members of his or her father's and mother's sibs. Early on the following morning the bridegroom arrives at the bride's house. Rice is again sprinkled and milk fed, to the bridegroom by members of the bride's father's sib, to the bride by members of the bridegroom's father's sib. Then follows the sammanda ceremony, by which the bride is made a member of her husband's sib. This is the essential ceremony of the marriage. The bride is then conducted from her house, being stopped as she leaves by her male cross-cousin, and is brought to her husband's house. There she performs the ceremony of carrying water into the house, as an earnest of the household duties that she will perform as a wife in this house. On that night the marriage is consummated. Details of the various ceremonies now follow.

On the first day of the wedding two separate but identical ceremonies called mu:rta are held, one at the bride's house the other at the bridegroom's. To each all the members of the respective sib and of the original sib of the mother of the central figure of the ceremony and all the members of the village sibs are invited. Preparations for the affair, cooking, cleaning and the like, have previously been made by the members of the house assisted by the closest or even by all of the sib-members. The bridegroom bathes on this morning in the bath-house; seven married women, who are not widows, from among his relatives, e.g. his sisters, his mother's and father's sisters, his uncles'

2: Emeneau L-5 (1936-1937) 1938
AW5 Coorg AW5

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[515] [602] wives, but not his brothers' wives, unless they are much older than himself,[1] must pour over him one pot of water each. After this he is arrayed in full Coorg dress, including the turban, dagger, and sword, and puts on heavy bangles and neck-chains. His long coat (kupia) should be white, as all such garments were anciently. The bride likewise is bathed by women and girls [515] [602] [292] from among her relatives, no one being barred from this office except widows. She is dressed in her best sari and headcloth and [301] decorated with a great number of ornaments, toe and finger rings, earrings, necklaces and chains, and hair-ornaments. When the guests have all arrived in the early morning (all wearing Coorg dress, though the men need not wear white coats), the bride and groom in their respective houses are brought forth [292] into the nellaki. Each is wearing in addition to their full dress a cloth over the head, the bride's covering her face but left unfastened in front. Each, conducted by a near relative or friend of the same sex (in the man's case frequently the husband of his sister, in the woman's the wife of her brother), circles three times in clockwise direction a stool between two standing lamps and [342] then is seated facing to the east on the stool, which has been [778] covered with a cloth. The nellaki was anciently the place for the [178] ceremony; at present it often takes place in the yard of the house in a pandal built for the occasion and fitted with the stool and two [533] standing lamps, but not with a hanging lamp. This shift of scene is due to the fact that the house is frequently too small to accommodate all the guests. During the ceremony four Coorg musicians beat on drums and sing the wedding song (this I hope to present and discuss linguistically elsewhere).

[614] When the central figure of the ceremony is seated, his or her mother, or if the mother is dead or a widow, the eldest married woman in the sib who is not a widow, stands in front [782] of him or her. She takes from a large flat plate of rice a handful and throws some first to the hanging lamp, apparently as an offering to the ancestors of the sib (if the ceremony is outside in the pandal, this is omitted), then over her head towards the sun;

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[607] [1] Younger ones are said to be restrained by shyness, but the fact is that they are women who are referred to as macini and are possible spouses of the man, in case they should be widowed and he should become a widower. Such relatives of a man, viz. all those whom he classes as macini and mammé, whether they are blood-relations (i.e. cross-cousins) or related merely by marriage, are the subjects of taboos with relation to him. They begin to operate when both parties have attained puberty. They may not touch one another, except in case of real necessity, nor may they sit on the same bench. Other specific taboos operating between [605] these cross-cousins seem to be lacking, since in general Coorg men and women observe about the same taboos in speech and action that are [834] observed in polite circles in western society. The specific taboos do not operate between any other classes or relatives; it may be observed that the taboo on touching is merely a very small extension of the usual reluctance of a Coorg man to touch a woman.

3:Iyer E-5 (no date) 1948 AW5 Coorg AW5

ed a passage to the immigrants from Malabar. From the above facts, it may be gathered that they were not an unmixed race. The house names of some of the Coorg families indicate Mysore, Tulu or Tamil origin. Their language, demon and ancestor-worship do tend to show that they belong to the Dravidian. Their traits are biologically useful and related to mental capacity and intellectual endowment. Their mountain habitat, climate, food and occupation are responsible for what they are at present, and these factors have differentiated them from the people of the plains.

Habitation

The Coorg houses are like those of the Nayars of Kerala. They are situated by the side of their paddy fields on a sheltering slope of Bane-land, surrounded by plantain trees, bastard sago, orange, jack and guava trees. A coffee garden and a small plot of land for the growth of vegetables are not absent on the Hittelmandala land. There is a small pond well stocked with fish. The position and type of building bear an analogy to those of the Nayars of Kerala. The approaches to the Coorg house strongly mark the design of fortification, and tradition goes back to a time of general feuds, when chief fought against chief and clan with clan. Deep trenches with high embankments are visible memorials to the warlike state of affairs in days gone by. These trenches intersect the mountainous district in every direction.

A deeply cut passage paved with rough stones and overgrown with shady trees, its sloping side walls decked with a variety of ferns, leads one in angular lines to a doorway passing under an outhouse. Houses are located in the midst of their plantations remote from the public gaze. A paved courtyard is surrounded by stables, store rooms, and servants' quarters, in front of which is the main quadrangular building which has one storey and is raised about three feet from the ground. All the buildings are roofed with bamboo and thatched with rice straw which is annually repaired and renewed. There is an open square hall in the centre known as batte or nundumane, the four sides of which are provided with rooms for the inmates to occupy. In front of the building there is an open verandah which is the reception hall. It is raised and covered with a wooden plank almirah two or three feet broad, so as to form convenient seats for the male members and visitors. From it rise three or four wooden pillars square, round and tapering, and sometimes carved. The floor is well beaten with mud and cleaned with cowdung. The ceiling is of wood, arranged in small compartments. In some, the verandah is separated from the inner hall by a wall with a sort of window or lattice made of wood. It is a contrivance intended for the benefit of the Coorg women who are curious to see visitors. On the right side of the verandah there is a main

3:Iyer E-5 (no date) 1948 AW5 Coorg AW5

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A View of a Coorg House and its sylvan environment

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A Front View of a Coorg House

[facing p. 40]

342 door leading into the inner hall which is lit by the skylight formed by the junction of the four slopes of the inner roof into an inner space (mittam) which is a masonry reservoir in which rain water is collected and drained off by an underground passage. The inner roof is supported on four pillars, [352] resting on thick board slabs of jackwood upon the walls of the reservoir, and forming convenient seats for the inmates of the house, the inner rooms of which are without windows and open by small doors into the central hall only. On the side diagonally opposite to the door of the verandah, and likewise on the inner right corner, there are two doors leading to the exterior of the house. The first room of the house is occupied by the master of the house and his wife. The next room is the kitchen-dining room whence the smoke issues and fills the hole house, coating and preserving the woodwork. The small rooms of the remaining two wings are [778] tenanted by the married couples, the widows and unmarried women. One room near the left corner is set apart as sacred to the family deity. From the ceiling are suspended match-locks, the wooden bells for cattle, the trappings of pack bullocks, and other domestic utensils. The space under the [353] roof and above the wooden ceiling, which is covered with a thick layer of [312] earth to keep the rooms below dry and fireproof, serves for storing bags of [343] rice, baskets, pots and culinary provisions. There is also a deep well built with stone in the compound to supply water for cooking purposes, and another hut by the side of the paddy fields for bathing in hot water.

352 The simplicity of the habits of the Coorgs is reflected in the furniture that they use. Wooden cots are generally used, with straw, coir, or cotton mattresses and cushions, sheets, and blankets; on the floor, they have coarse mats for rubbing their feet before going to bed. Occasionally they use wooden stools. A wooden shelf is fixed to the wall in each room to keep [415] their brass vessels, plates and lamps. Rattan or wooden boxes contain their [854] clothing and jewels. There is always a spittoon in one corner of the room. [177] Where there is a baby, a rattan cradle is suspended from the ceiling within reach of the mother's bed. Young Coorgs of the present day have better houses and good furniture as also comfortable arrangements in the European style.

Internal Structure

619 The Coorgs are composed of four endogamous groups. Amma, Sanna Malla and Boddu Coorgs. The Amma and Sanna Coorgs are found in all parts of Coorg. The Malla and Sanna Coorgs are united and are no longer distinguishable. They form the principal class of Coorgs.

Exogamy

614 The Coorg clans are too many to mention. Most of them are their local house names. Some are alien. Marriage within the clan is prohibited.

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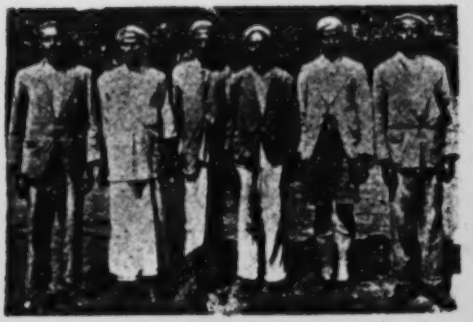
A typical Coorg in his smart attire



Amma Coorg Male Group

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An Amma Coorg House

[facing p. 65]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

249 seedlings of 3 or 4 pairs of leaves are removed from the nursery with a ball of earth attached to the roots and transplanted into the holes marked by the pegs. This is the surest and therefore cheapest mode of planting.

Weeding is the next operation to be carefully attended to, but where from the nature of the soil or of the lay of the land there is danger of loss of surface soil from heavy rain, no hoe weeding is allowed during the monsoon; but only hand weeding or cutting with grass-knives and, after the monsoon, a breaking [491] up of the soil, to turn the weeds down. Easy roads are laid out to bring every part of the estate within ready access and at the same time to be the means of an effectual drainage.

[342] [361] With the end of the first year's operations, the planter very likely builds for himself a simple cottage on a convenient spot, that commands a fine view and some Bungalows are most beautifully situated. With the third year the estate comes into flower and bearing. In March or April the snowy white of the blossoms, in their copiousness but slightly relieved by the dark green foliage, delights the eyes with its morning freshness and purity, wherever you look, and in their bridal glory the jessamine-like flowers fill the air with an agreeable aroma. Let us examine a three years' old tree of best growth. 245 137 It is 4 feet high of a pyramidical shape with alternately opposite branches (primaries) of which the topmost are 8 inches and the lowest 3 feet long, which are subdivided by secondaries and tertiaries. The flowers are in appearance like jessamines on short stalks, in clusters round the branches and last but 2 days. The tree under examination numbers 20 pairs of branches, and 3 inches from the stem the clusters of flowers begin; the lowest branch contains 22, the middle 8 and the uppermost 2 clusters with an average of 12 blossoms each. These do not all set and produce mature berries, but give an idea of the fertility of the shrub. Gentle showers or heavy mists at this time greatly enhance the fecundity of

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

3. SOCIAL LIFE OF THE COORGS.

a. The Coorg house.

The Coorg houses are generally situated close to their paddy-fields on a sheltering slope of Bâne land, surrounded by clumps of plantain trees, sago and betel-nut palms and other fruit-bearing trees. A coffee garden and a small plot for the growth of native vegetables are seldom absent, and, where the locality is favourable, a little tank well stocked with fish is not uncommon. The position, the style of building and the approaches of old Coorg houses strongly remind one of small fortifications, and tradition points back to a time of general feuds, when chief fought with chief, clan with clan. In the deep cadangas or ditches with high banks, we still see memorials of that warlike state of affairs. These war-ditches intersect the mountainous districts in every direction, and resisted not only many a furious attack of contending parties, but also the force of the annual monsoon.

A deeply cut passage, paved with rough stones and overgrown with shady trees, and the sloping side walls decked with a variety of luxuriant ferns, leads you in angular lines to the doorway, passing under an out-house. Over a paved courtyard, on three sides enclosed by stables, store-rooms and servants' quarters, you come to the front of the main building, which is a square of one story and raised about 3 feet above the ground. All the buildings are roofed with bamboos, and thatched with rice-straw. Considering that there is an open square hall in the centre of the house, called nadumane there remain the four sides only for habitable quarters. The front side however is reserved for an open verandah—the reception hall. Near to the right end the principal door leads to the inner rooms, which are all dark, opening only by a small door into the inner square, which is lit by the sky-light formed

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

by the junction of the four inner slopes of the roof, the dripping rain-water from which is collected in a masonry reservoir and drained off in an underground channel. On the side opposite to the verandah two doors communicate with the backyard of the house. 342

The front of the verandah is raised, and covered with a 2 feet broad wooden slab, so as to form a convenient seat; from it rise 3 or 4 wooden pillars, square and tapering and sometimes carved; the floor is of well beaten mud overlayed with cowdung; and the ceiling of wood arranged in small compartments. In some houses the verandah is separated from the inner hall merely by a wooden grating, in others by a solid earthwall with a sort of window, or lattice, made of wood. Like the principal door posts this aperture is often very handsomely carved in flowers and figures leaving small open spaces between, just enough to peep through without being seen, a contrivance chiefly for the benefit of the fair Kodagitis, who are as curious to see and observe visitors as their Mussulman sisters behind the Purdah or screen. [352] [237] [532]

Entering through the principal door, the first compartment to the right is occupied by the master of the house and his wife. The next room is the kitchen from which the smoke issues and fills the whole house, coating and preserving the wood-work. While the European rubs his eyes and gasps for fresh air, the inmates of the house feel no inconvenience and only smile at his sensitiveness. The small compartments of the remaining two wings are tenanted by the married couples, and the unmarried women; the boys and young men sleep in the hall. From the ceiling are suspended matchlocks and rifles, the wooden bells and trappings for their pack-bullocks, and other domestic utensils, and the space under the roof, which is reached by a ladder, serves for storing bags, baskets, pads, pots, onions, salt, etc. [513] [353]

The house and yard are generally kept clean and orderly, ooo

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